

Minutes
West Tisbury Library Board of Trustees
Thursday, October 23, 2008
at the West Tisbury Public Library

Present

Trustees: Leslie Baker, Linda Hearn, Hermine Hull, Ginny Jones, Dan Waters

Staff: Beth Kramer

Friends: Suzi Wasserman

Public: Leah Smith, Capital Improvements Committee

Preliminary

In the absence of Secretary Elaine Pace, Dan Waters volunteered to take minutes for this meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Linda Hearn opened by noting with sadness the passing of library patron and benefactress Betty Franklin, who had died the day before. Hermine Hull will write a note of condolence on behalf of the board.

Committee Reports

Capital Improvements Committee: As she did last year at this time, Leah Smith explained that the role of her committee is to look ahead five years and review any predicted town expenditures of \$10,000 or more. She asked that the Library report any specific foreseen expenditures by December 1. This led to a general discussion of possible expenses including parking lot lighting, windows, roof, and the back door area. Linda and Beth said they would write a letter to the Selectmen, urging that the town redouble its efforts on the parking lot, whose condition continues to deteriorate, and send a copy of the letter to the Capital Improvements Committee.

It was decided to take advantage of Ms. Smith's presence to discuss an expenditure-related item of new business. It has been learned that the Welles property at 1034 State Road, adjacent to the library and across the street from Alley's Store, has been listed for sale by Karen M. Overtoom Real Estate with an asking price of \$775,000. In the general discussion which followed, it was noted that acquiring this property could relieve pressure on the Library's shared parking lot, which is small and problematic; that the property would offer access to Brandy Brow; that it would allow a continuous pedestrian and bike path around a hazardous corner; that it might allow a combination of affordable housing, public restrooms, a well, and a bus shelter or VTA turnaround, among other benefits. Suzi Wasserman indicated support from the Friends for this idea, and recommended that the Trustees write a letter to the Selectmen requesting that they appoint a task force to investigate the feasibility and advisability of purchasing the Welles property for future town use. Dan said he would draft the letter and be present with Suzi, Linda and others at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Leah Smith left at 7:20.

Friends of the Library: Suzi Wasserman reported that the Friends' next meeting will be held in two weeks; that they will consider a letter from the Director requesting funds for 2009; and that

they will discuss the Welles property matter further. Suzi also noted that the Friends have just received two more carloads of books for next year's book sale, and that the book sheds are fuller than usual for this time of year but well-organized.

Director's Report: Beth reported that the number of library patrons in September was the same as last year, but that circulation increased over 18%, computer use was up 29%, and that program attendees increased 45%. She said she had applied for a grant from the Martha's Vineyard Cultural Council to provide honoraria for poets and authors from the Fine Arts Workshop as part of the Library's Winter Reading Series. She noted that Nelia Decker and Colleen Morris will be going off-Island next week for training.

Assistant Director's Report: In the absence of Colleen, Beth reported on the Library's outreach efforts. Nelia went to the West Tisbury School Book Sale/Open House to advertise the new Teen Advisory Group and to give library cards to new patrons. Library staff have visited the Charter School's Junior High twice a month for book talks and instruction on using the Library. The Charter School's High School students get monthly tutoring and instruction on Library use. The Teen Advisory Group, consisting of about ten kids, will meet once a month. They have decorated the library, volunteered for the Halloween party, and suggested program ideas for themselves and their peers.

Beth noted that the Library will host a poetry reading on Wednesday, October 29th at 5 p.m. with the town's poet laureate. She asked Trustees to volunteer to bring treats for the annual Halloween party, and thanked Hermine for the napkins and the spider web.

On the subject of library decoration, Beth gave the floor to Leslie Baker, who has been coordinating the monthly art displays along with Hermine. For the month of December, Leslie said, they have decided to try something different: a winter-themed mural to be collaboratively created by library patrons. Titled "Our Town," the mural would consist of a large sheet of paper with a general landscape outline onto which patrons could affix paper cut-outs and other lightweight creations. The hope is that the mural might be finished in time for the Library holiday party on December 16th.

Beth reported on progress by the Community Planning Committee and her subsequent meeting on Goals and Objectives with SEMLS consultant Cheryl Bryan. Based on the three Goals and Objectives agreed upon at the planning meeting, Cheryl and Beth formulated three Service Responses for board approval. Beth presented copies of the Responses for discussion and approval at next month's Trustees meeting.

Pursuant to a recent workshop she attended in collection development, Beth has drafted a new proposed Youth Services Material Selection Policy and Programming Policy. She distributed copies of these for discussion and approval at a future Trustees meeting as part of the board's ongoing development of a cohesive set of Library policies.

With budget deadlines impending, Beth requested a meeting with the budget subcommittee. She reported that she, Ginny and Linda had gone to the Selectmen this week to make them aware that

the yearly cost to the library of non-patrons using the Library restroom amounts to an estimated \$2,500, and that with the new cleaning services contractor, that cost may rise. The Selectmen said they would endorse an increased budget for restroom maintenance. Beth asked the board if she should ask for a reserve fund transfer based on a cleaning service estimate, and the sense of the room was that she should.

Approval of Minutes: It was agreed to postpone approval of the board meeting minutes of September 11, 2008 until the Secretary could be present.

Old Business

Materials Selection Policy: With minor syntactical changes, the Materials Selection Policy was approved as presented. Dan moved, Ginny seconded, and the vote was unanimous. In order to conform more closely with this policy, Beth said she would revise the “Material Selection Inquiry” form with which patrons may request that specific materials be added to or removed from the Library’s permanent collection.

Meeting Room Policy: There was a thorough discussion about whether the Library’s Meeting Room should be available to community groups outside of regular library hours, with or without staff supervision. In the end, it was decided to drastically simplify the policy to read as follows:

“The primary purpose of the meeting room at the West Tisbury Free Public Library is to accommodate library-related activities. From time to time as a community service and at the discretion of the director, the library may make its meeting room available during regular library hours to non-profit community groups. However, in allocating the use of this room, the needs of the library take precedence over those of other agencies.”

Ginny moved to approve, Hermine seconded, and the Meeting Room Policy was approved by unanimous vote.

New Business:

Leslie reported that the apron samples she has seen from Janway have not been satisfactory. The company has suggested that she find aprons to her taste and have them silkscreened locally. Suzi said the Friends would support any research necessary in this direction. Ginny added that she would like to see potholders with the library logo.

Ginny reported on a cache of Vineyard schoolwork from November 1909 that was found stuffed under the floorboards during the Town Hall renovation. Items included “faintly naughty” postcards, bottle-top inserts, homework and other relics from a century ago. The Historical Society has evinced lukewarm interest in archiving the items, but Ginny recommended that the Library have first choice as to whether to keep or display them. Hermine suggested creating a wall exhibit. Dan suggested scanning them and putting them on the library website.

Ginny reported that she has been researching solar panels for hot water heating, and that this

technology might be a viable alternative for the Library the next time the roof needs repair.

Ted Murphy recently called Hermine to say that his family was interested in making a sizable donation to the library in memory of their parents, Stephen and Maureen Murphy. There was a general discussion about the idea of an outright purchase versus an endowment fund. Hermine will continue to talk to the family about their desires, since the Library will undoubtedly need and appreciate the gift. At the same time, at this point in the strategic planning process it is difficult to make piecemeal commitments to large-scale capital expenditures.

Correspondence and Comments from the Public: None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dan Waters
Acting Secretary